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AUTHOR Ebb, Nancy
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ABSTRACT

This report is one in a series of studies by the Children's Defense Fund examining state policies and practices in child care and early childhood education. It is based on comprehensive surveys conducted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in 1991 and 1993 to examine Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) child care policies and programs. Two major findings from the data are highlighted: (1) AFDC child care is already stretched to the limit, with strains apparent in services for both AFDC and non-AFDC low income families; and (2) funding limitations and policy choices hurt AFDC children by tilting AFDC child care programs toward low-cost child care options that tend to be of poorer quality. The report recommends that successful welfare reform be supported by additional investments in child care for both AFDC and low-income working families, that child care guarantees be strengthened, and that the quality of child care provided for the neediest children be improved. (MDM)

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